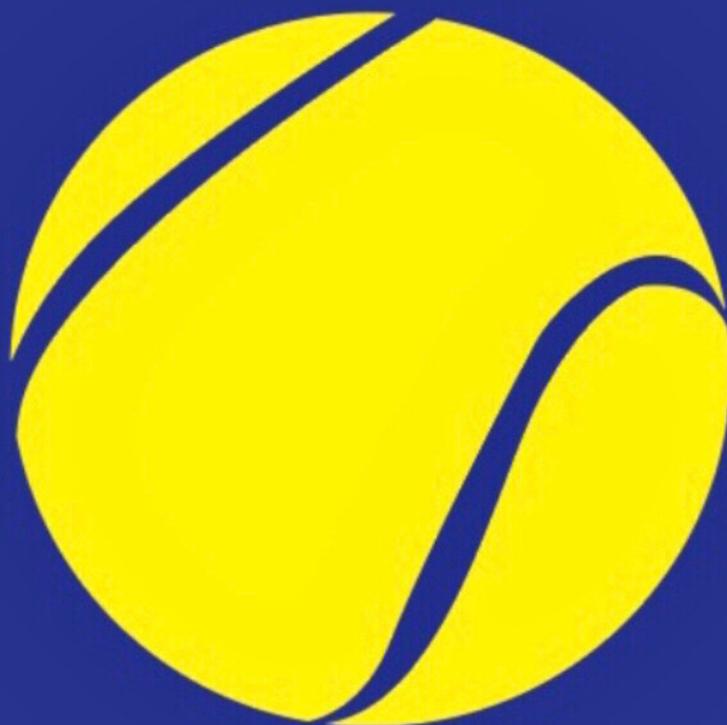


*BARNET WOOD*

*NEWSLETTER OF HAYES TENNIS CLUB*

*ISSUE 5 JULY 2023*



**HAYES TENNIS CLUB**

**HAYES CHARACTERS**

**SALLY HILLS**

# **Sally's Story: Always ask a busy person**

## **By Sally Hills**

I'm Sally Hills, Hayes Ladies Captain, and I lead a busy life. I work part-time and organise all the ladies matches, midweek mixed, vets matches and the ladies for the mixed 1 and mixed 2 matches which means getting our ladies confirmed as well as the opposition, preparing food, remembering balls, scorecards, collecting money and filing results. How wonderful it would be just to turn up and play.

The other day I partnered Phil Jopson then Catherine Shepherd in a Midweek Mixed Vets match v David Lloyd Sidcup which Hayes comfortably won 4-0. David Stirk partnered Catherine in the mixed round.

All this after a sad month when I lost my mum, Ellen, to whom I was devoted. Mum was 93 and had a heart attack and passed away 11 hours later. I am still shocked by the speed of mum's departure but happy that she didn't suffer. Eighty five people went to the funeral to celebrate the long and happy life of Ellen and I am really grateful for so many people paying their respects. It was a proper celebration. Mum and I were close, for years now I've cooked dinner for mum daily as well as entertaining her, taking her on shopping trips, holidays as well as playing many games including Ellen's favourite 'Bananagrams' involving a banana shaped bag full of letters and each making a crossword to use up all letters and the first to finish shouting "Bananas". Ellen often winning and providing some quality words!

For the past 17 years I've done a lot of caring as my dad was unwell for 5 years before he passed away in 2012 aged 88.

Living in Sidcup means that I pass around 6 tennis clubs on my way to Hayes. I make no secret of the fact that I would like to give up the Ladies Captaincy role and I've been trying for at least 5 years. Would I leave our club? I could never leave Hayes.

I became a member about 20 years ago as my good friends and netball team mates, Catherine Shepherd and Janette Devine, were already members. It was hard to leave netball when we played at such a high standard to come to tennis where my standard was very low. This was helped along by lots of kind Hayes

members especially Bill Eastwood and Dennis Leek who were full of encouragement and made the social aspect a big part of playing tennis and joining a club.

According to Sandra's Finals Day Record I've been in 14 ladies' doubles finals winning 8 of them, 6 ladies singles finals winning Zero of them and 2 mixed doubles finals winning both of them.

Currently I am partnered by James Dear for Kent matches and the club tournament. As you get older you need to play with younger, taller, fitter players to cover more of the court for you and I often shout 'Yours.'

Results for the ladies' team haven't been great this Summer and I have chosen not to play them but I am always on standby if they are short and I am confident results will improve. As always it would be good to have more ladies but everyone is doing their best and enjoying themselves.

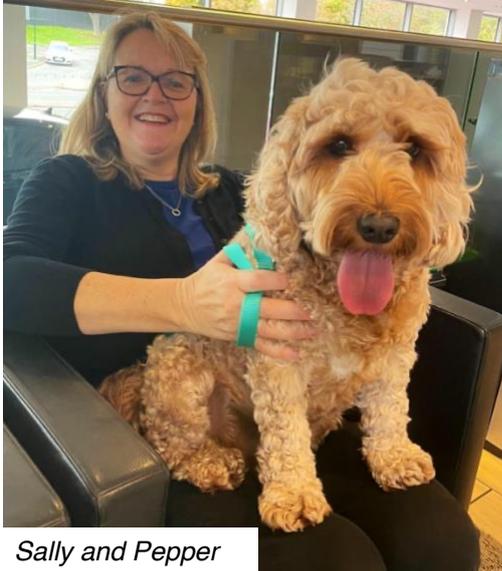
Midweek mixed vets results are good with losing 1, drawing 1 but winning 3 so far. We are in Division B which is probably where we should be for our level but we all enjoy the matches.

Family plays a big part in my life being the youngest of 3 brothers (1 brother sadly passed away 5 years ago), 1 sister and 1 half- sister, 10 nieces and nephews who are nearly all married with 15 and counting great nieces and nephews including some who are in Australia and America.

I work as a PA to an Insolvency Practitioner dealing with companies being closed in a tax efficient way but more often having to close as they are unable to keep their heads above water. It is an interesting job with different challenges every day.

My husband, of nearly 31 years, Keith, who was a member at Hayes for a while many years ago, is a successful dinghy sailor and has won many World and National Championships in Laser 2, Hornet and J80 boats. He's also a contractor for NatWest bank and is into amateur dramatics having recently played Carmen's love interest in The Producers (a gay role that he was hilarious in) and my daughter Rebecca is a recently qualified Primary school teacher who also performs regularly for a few different amateur dramatic societies and so far this year has been in Panto, Our House, The Producers and is in A Chorus Line in Erith Playhouse from the 4th of

July. I am very proud of Rebecca and would love to see her on the West End stage in the future. I am often found backstage sewing costumes and collecting Keith and Rebecca after show nights and after show parties in the early hours of the morning. With Keith and Rebecca out of the house so often I am left in charge of Rebecca's



*Sally and Pepper*

dog Pepper who takes up a lot of walking time but gives lots of love in return. I am a keen baker and I cater for parties from time to time and I recently left the North Kent Council where I was on the committee for about 10 years having also been Ladies league organiser. Up until Covid I also used to run an art class every week that my father started 40 years beforehand and I continued after he passed away. Friday is 'My Day' and I go to an advanced tap dancing class that I have been doing for 40 years on and off and that is followed by a pilates class to wind down my week.

Now I have more time on my hands I am planning some holidays including New York and Vegas this Summer to see Adele at Caesars Palace, Canada next year and maybe some volunteering work to visit elderly people who aren't as fortunate as my mum to see someone every day.

Keith and I have a caravan in Birdham near Chichester and West Wittering beach so if no matches are arranged we will always be heading there for weekends to walk along the beach with Pepper and recharge the batteries of a hectic life.

## Plans to build a new bar

Nigel Gallagher has talked about his plans for the club after next month's Beer Festival. Warman Trust Chairman Nigel said a minimum of £20,000 would need to be spent on a new bar refurbishment in 2024.

He added, "There is huge expense here - the back of house in the bar is tired, dirty and inadequate, internally the bar needs much doing and we will need considerable funds. No budget as yet but I would estimate £20K will be a minimum."



The Beer Festival is on August 27, the day before the Summer Bank Holiday. It's now in its sixth year, having started in 2017, with a missed Pandemic year in 2020. It comprises a beer tent with 16 types of ale, and 28 types of cider, and a live music band playing two sessions a day. With more families joining in the

festivities there's a place for mums and toddlers and for the older children an inflatable assault course and a bouncy castle. Food is supplied including sausages, a BBQ, Greek and other ethnic food.

"We have the format and it's now just a case of rolling it out," Nigel went on. He would like to meet the Tennis Committee to ease any fears they may have about little progress having been made at the club from funds supplied by social events such as the Festival.

"I would really value an opportunity to hear their views and concerns," he said.

"Anyone who has been at the club since we built the changing room extension in 2017 will see the vast difference in the club. "

Aside from the changing rooms, the club now has fully refurbished:-



- the hall including the new insulated ceiling, and floor.
- the ladies WC.
- the committee room with additional storage and cupboard space.

Large trees that were out of control between the tennis courts and the ground have also been removed. Nigel said, “We have a brand new roof covering over the building. This was financed largely by a loan from the brewery that is almost repaid.”



The increasingly popular social evenings on Fridays are also providing much-needed cash to fund improvements at the club, as more and more new members join.

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***Please send all comments to  
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